

# New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT



**Fiscal Year 2000**

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE – EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

*“Huge hills and mountains of casks were piled upon her wharves, and side by side the world-wandering whale ships lay silent and safely moored at last” – Herman Melville, Moby-Dick*



## Overview

New Bedford Whaling NHP is managed through a vibrant and inclusive network of partners actively involved in continuous collaboration. Through combined effort, we work to ensure that resources are protected, and future generations will understand and appreciate the role of whaling and the sea in American history. The past year has provided us with many opportunities to better know our partners and explore the kinds of projects we can accomplish by working together.

The NPS role in bringing a national voice to the history of the whaling era has taken many forms this past year. NPS scholarship produced an award winning cultural landscape report titled *Safely Moored At Last*. Research through the *Faces of Whaling* and *Places of Whaling* oral history projects uncovered untold stories. The park helped to construct and launch of two Azorean whaleboats, symbolizing a cultural bond over 100 years old. Teachers made connections with staff and resources of the park through the *Portraits of a Port* teacher institute. The youth of New Bedford enlivened the park by participating in a *Teen Art Coalition*. Thousands of visitors participated in park volunteer led walking tours and enthusiastic crowds were enriched by events such as *AHA! Art History and Architecture* gallery nights and *Thursday Evenings in the Park*.

Two key tasks this year were to develop the park's General Management Plan and to rehabilitate the mid-nineteenth century bank building that serves as the park visitor center. The park's draft GMP is complete and comments have been gathered. A record of decision is expected in the Spring of 2001. Interior work on the visitor center is drawing to a close. Park partners have been relocated, systems have been upgraded, plaster work and painting is complete, and new exhibits and an accessible ramp will soon be completed.

## **Planning**

**General Management Plan** – The preliminary management alternatives for the park were released this past fall. Comments on the plan were accepted until December 1, 2000. In addition to hosting a public meeting and a wide range of discussion forums with park partners, the park published and distributed over 15,000 copies of a GMP supplement that highlighted the three management alternatives. A record of decision is expected the Spring of 2001.

**Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP)** – The Harpers Ferry Center and the park have completed an LRIP detailing the operation of the park's interpretive program for the next 5 years. The LRIP is one of three components of the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP). The remaining CIP components (Annual Interpretive Plan and Interpretive Database) were completed in-house.

**Collections Management Plan (CMP)**– The Northeast Museum Services Center and the park completed a comprehensive CMP for the park. The CMP will serve as the park's primary planning document for the management and care of museum objects and archival collections.

**Strategic Plan** – The park completed a Strategic Plan for FY 2001 – FY 2005. The plan contains the park's mission goals and long-term goals that describe in quantified, measurable ways examples of what the park plans to achieve in the six-year period covered by this plan.

**Visitor Survey** – The NPS Visitor Services Project released the findings of a visitor study conducted at the park in July 1999. The study provided the park and its partners with accurate information about visitors – who they are, what they do, their needs and opinions. The report has been posted on the park's expanded website and distributed widely to park partners.

**Education Collaborative** – A group of ten local organizations, including the park, initiated this innovative collaborative this past fiscal year. Funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the goal of the collaborative is to produce curriculum based educational experiences for area teachers. The collaborative is piloting programs for grades 2, 6 and 8 with plans to expand in the future.

## **Resource Stewardship**

**Visitor Center Stabilization and Rehabilitation** – The park, working with the NPS Lands Office and the Building Conservation Branch of the Cultural Resources Center, undertook the preservation and rehabilitation of the former New Bedford Institution for Savings (NBIS) Building. The Lands Office facilitated the transfer of the building from the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) to the NPS. The park relocated WHALE and its tenant, the New Bedford Preservation Society, to temporary quarters in a leased temporary visitor center until they could find permanent office space. The rehab project included the construction of accessible restrooms on the first floor, the installation of a fire detection and suppression system, and interior painting and rehab. An accessible entrance will be completed by March 2001.





Nathan and Polly Johnson Properties NHL – Director Stanton served as guest speaker at the New Bedford Historical Society’s National Historical Landmark plaque installation ceremony this past September. The Johnson House was designated as a National Historic Landmark because of its role as the first home of fugitive Frederick Douglass after his 1838 escape from slavery. Park staff and the Cultural Resources Center provided technical support for the NHL nomination.

Technical Assistance – The park staff expanded in FY 2000, when a Historical Architect and a Community Planner were hired to assist in a wide range of ongoing resource stewardship and partnership projects. The park’s Historical Architect also serves as the Secretary of the New Bedford Historical Commission, the organization that monitors and approves physical change within the historical park. The park worked with business and homeowners within the park on the design of new signs and exterior improvements for stores and residences, and continues to serve as a primary source for design assistance within the park’s boundaries.

The park’s Community Planner has assisted partners with a wide range of grant-funded proposals and projects, including a successful *Save America’s Treasures* proposal to stabilize the endangered Corson Building. State and private funds helped launch and support the *AHA! Art, History and Architecture* gallery night program and the *Teen Art Coalition* summer youth program. The park’s Community Planner continues to serve as a liaison with municipal and state planning, as well as businesses and civic organizations.

Cultural Landscape Maintenance and Enhancement – The Park contributed \$5,000 in materials to upgrade lampposts, sidewalks, and wayfinder information panels within the park. By law, the entire 34 acre 70 building area that is included in the park boundary must be administered according to all of the laws applicable to units of the National Park System. Because much of this area is municipally owned effective relations with the City of New Bedford is critical. This pilot program is an important first step in what we hope will be many future partnerships with the City of New Bedford Departments of Public Works, Tourism and Wiring.



## Resource Education

Visitor Center Exhibits – The 20% Recreational Fee Demonstration Program provided funds for the design and installation of visitor center exhibits which will highlight the resources of the park, explain the partnership management approach to the park, and introduce visitors to the park’s themes. Installation will be completed in February.

Audio Visual Orientation – The 20% Recreational Fee Demonstration Program provided funding for the production of a multi-image audiovisual orientation program illustrating the history of American whaling. This free program will be housed at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. A Request for Proposal was issued in December to Harpers Ferry Center IDIQ firms.



Maritime Heritage Festival – The NPS co-sponsored the fifth annual Maritime Heritage Festival this past May. This free festival offered opportunities for the visitors explore the New Bedford waterfront and learn about the continuing traditions of maritime New England.

Teen Art Coalition – The NPS in conjunction with Artworks! at Dover Street, Spinner Publications and New Directions, sponsored an innovative art program for 20 young people from the local area. Over the course of the summer participants completed numerous art and media projects related to the history of the park and the City of New Bedford.

Thursday Evenings in the Park – For the third straight summer the park offered an array of music every Thursday evening during July and August. Performances included traditional Lebanese, Latin and Cape Verdean music, Madeiran traditional music and dance, and a local gospel choir.

Summerfest 2000 – (Nuvukmiut Dancers) A delegation of 15 from Barrow, Alaska traveled to New Bedford to participate in the opening ceremonies for the new wing of the New Bedford Whaling Museum and the New Bedford Summerfest 2000. The visit was an opportunity to develop greater understanding of the shared whaling heritage of New Bedford and Barrow, and helped cement the legislated and historical relationship between these two distant places.



AHA! Gallery Night Program – New Bedford's cultural renaissance continued this past summer as AHA! headed into its second year. Art galleries, museums, and cultural institutions in and around New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park joined forces to celebrate the region's art, history and architecture. The programming for AHA! ranged from concerts in the garden of the national historical park visitor center, to performances, and art exhibitions at various locations.

*Portraits of a Port* Summer Teacher Institute – This program provided teachers with a two-week professional developmental opportunity in the park. Teachers examined the social, demographic, technological, political and economic dynamics over the span of two centuries in New Bedford; created a 'tool box' of resources and activities; and developed course units for use in their classrooms consistent with the Massachusetts History/Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks.

*Places of Whaling* – In FY 1999 the park completed an oral history project on a small and aging population of whalers and whaling families from New Bedford and brought to light previously untold stories of African-American, Cape Verdean, West Indian, Native American, and Azorean whaling families. As a result, a number of local places of significance to the whaling community were identified. These "places of whaling" include social clubs, outfitting stores, cordage and whale oil refinery businesses, boarding houses, places of worship, cemeteries, and schools. This project has begun to gather oral history interviews and photo-documentation to interpret the places associated with the whaling era in the neighborhoods throughout the City of New Bedford.

Azorean Whaleboat Project – In celebration of a bond that is centuries old, the Azorean Maritime Heritage Society, with the New Bedford Whaling Museum and New Bedford Whaling NHP as partners, launched two Azorean whaleboats into the New Bedford harbor. The whaleboats were constructed by Azorean master boat builders, carpenters and former whalers. Working side-by-side in a boathouse located on the grounds of the Whaling Museum, craftsmen painstakingly assembled the whaleboats using traditional tools and materials. The government of Portugal and municipalities on the Azorean islands of Faial and Pico also supported the project.

## New Partnerships

**Artworks! at Dover Street** – This non-profit corporation utilizes private funds to support and stimulate the economic development of New Bedford through its contemporary art galleries, studios, resource library and facilities, teen art center, and collaborative programs and projects. ArtWorks! And the Park collaborated on several projects of note including the Teen Art Coalition, AHA! and the *Toggle-Iron* newsletter.



**New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce** – This non-profit corporation is interested in the promotion of economic development throughout the Southcoast area of Massachusetts. The Chamber assisted the park with the production of the *Toggle Iron* newsletter and serves as the coordinating body of Summerfest.

**Message Project** – The Park was selected as the pilot park for the Northeast Region for this agency-wide initiative. The Message Project, funded by the National Park Foundation is an effort to improve the way the NPS communicates externally and internally. As a pilot the park participated in media training, focus group sessions, and implemented several of the recommendations to solidify the park and agency image. The park's *Toggle Iron* newsletter, which made its debut this year, utilized Message Project templates and principles.



**International Relations** – The New Bedford area, as a result of the whaling industry and other influences, has the largest population of people of Azorean Portuguese heritage in the US. In the spring of 2000 representatives of the Park, the New Bedford Whaling Museum and other local representative traveled to the Azores under the sponsorship of the US Department of Agriculture working on behalf of the Department of Defense. Park and museum staff met with their counterparts at Whaling Museums in the Azores.

## Volunteers

**Visitor Services** – The Park has an active volunteer staff now numbering 78 who collectively contributed over 14,000 hours this year. In addition to providing visitor information and conducting walking tours, volunteers assisted with special projects and programs, including the design of an expanded park website. This year, a Volunteer Leadership Council was formed to help share information between volunteers and park management.



**Walking Tours** – The Park and its partners offered a variety of regularly scheduled programs and special events throughout the summer. Guided walking tours of the historic district led by National Park Service volunteers were offered 2-3 times daily. Over 1000 visitors participated in these free tours. An intensive volunteer recruitment and training program was offered in the spring and summer and three volunteer recognition events were held during the year.

### **Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)**

This Annual Performance Report (APR) was written in part to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Congress passed this law in 1993 to bring the federal government into the “performance management revolution.” Performance management is a goal-driven management concept and practice already widely adopted by the private sector, state and local governments, and many others. GPRA seeks to make government both more effective and efficient. The value of achieved results is the “return on investment” made in the National Park Service (NPS) by Congress and the American public.

The implementation of GPRA is a continuing process. First, each park area develops mission goals, which describe the desired resource conditions, public enjoyment, and visitor experiences. By achieving these goals, the park's purpose will be fulfilled, its significance maintained, and its mandates met. Mission goals are comprehensive and for perpetuity; they are not quantifiable. In addition, each park sets long-term and annual performance goals. GPRA mandates that each park complete the following:

- A 5-Year Strategic Plan (*as a recent addition to the NPS New Bedford Whaling NHP has a 4 year strategic plan*)
- An Annual Performance Plan
- An Annual Performance Report (*this document*)

### **GPRA Reporting Requirements**

**Ia1- Visitor Satisfaction** - By September 30, 2005, 95% of visitors to New Bedford Whaling NHP are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. *The park achieved a 97% visitor satisfaction rate during FY 2000.*

**Ib1 - Visitor Understanding and Appreciation** - By September 30, 2005, 75% of New Bedford Whaling NHP on-site park visitors surveyed can identify the significance of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. *The park achieved a 74% visitor understanding rate during FY 2000.*

**Iva3A - Performance Plans Linked to Goals** - By September 30, 2005 100% of New Bedford Whaling NHP employee performance plans are linked to appropriate strategic and annual performance goals and position competencies. *All park employee performance plans are linked to appropriate strategic and annual performance goals.*

**Iva4A - Workforce Diversity- Permanent Positions** - By September 30, 2005, the number of New Bedford Whaling NHP permanent positions in the 9 targeted occupational series filled by employees from underrepresented groups is increased from 2 at the end FY 1999 to 3 (42%). *The park did not hire any permanent positions in the 9 targeted occupational series during FY 2000.*

*IVa4B - Workforce Diversity - Seasonal Positions - By September 30, 2005, the total number of New Bedford Whaling NHP temporary/seasonal positions annually filled by underrepresented groups is increased from 1 in FY 1999 to 2 (50%). The park did not hire any additional seasonal positions during FY 2000.*

*IVa6A - Employee Safety- Lost-time Injury Rate - By September 30, 2005, the number of New Bedford Whaling NHP employee lost-time injuries is maintained at the FY 1998-1999 average of 0. The park maintained its average of 0 for Lost-time injury for FY 2000.*

*IVa6A - Employee Safety- Continuation of Pay Hours - By September 30, 2005, the number of New Bedford Whaling NHP hours of Continuation of Pay is maintained at 0. The park maintained its continuation of pay hours at 0 for FY 2000.*

*IVb1 - Volunteer Hours - By September 30, 2005, number of New Bedford Whaling NHP volunteer hours is increased to 15,127 hours. The number of volunteer hours increased during FY 2000 to 15,345.*

*IVb2A - Cash Donations and Grants - By September 30, 2005, cash donations and cash grants received by the park or its partners for partnership related projects is increased from \$58,000 in FY 1999 to \$78,000 (25%). The park received or assisted partners in receiving over \$150,000.00 in cash donations and grants during FY 2000.*

#### **FY 2001 Projects**

General Management Plan – File a record of decision on the park’s GMP in the winter of 2001 and publish the final General Management Plan for distribution.

Visitor Center Rehabilitation – Complete the remaining phases of the line-item construction project including selective brownstone replacement on the exterior and an access ramp into the building. Resume operations, maintenance services, and develop a cyclic maintenance program.

Audio-Visual Orientation – Complete the majority of the 20% fee demo project in anticipation of a spring 2002 premier. Oversee research, script development, production and technical needs.

Corson Building – Begin a process that will lead to the successful redevelopment of the Corson Building to serve as an education and public program facility for the park and its partners.

Route 18 – Serve as a member of the Route 18 planning team responsible for design solutions that will preserve and restore cultural landscapes within the park and reconnect the New Bedford waterfront with the historical park. Route 18 runs through the park’s eastern boundary.

150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Publication of *Moby-Dick* – A *Parks as Classrooms* grant will support the development of educational materials for *Melville and Multiculturalism: Teaching and Learning About Literature Amid Historic Sites*. Partners in this four-week teacher institute will include the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Melville Society, and Mystic Seaport Museum.

Places of Whaling Oral History Project – Complete oral histories and photo documentation of the "places of whaling" and publish findings. Continue outreach into New Bedford neighborhoods.



Traveler Information Radio Station – Complete the installation of a TIS radio station along Interstate 195 in New Bedford. The station will provide directions, attraction information and special events, which would repeat in a continuous broadcast.

Re-Housing of Historic District Archives – The historic district archives collection is currently scattered among several locations within the city and is at risk due to inconsistency in organization, inaccessibility, poor storage and lack of security. The archives will be re-housed at the park visitor center with funds from the NPS Museum Collections Preservation Program.

Legislative Proposal – The park’s General Management Plan requires legislation to carry out components of the plan. A legislative proposal and support package will be prepared in cooperation with the NPS Office and Legislative and Congressional Affairs.

Friends Group - There is no group that advocates solely for the interests of the park. A friends group will be established to assist the park in meeting programming and visitor service goals.

Arctic Collection Cataloguing – The National Park Service in collaboration with the New Bedford Whaling Museum will catalogue and develop a web-based exhibit of over 600 Native Alaskan artifacts and photographs that related directly to the history of American whaling in Barrow, Alaska. This project is to be coordinated out of the Northeast Museum Services Center.

Resource Stewardship and Education – The Park will continue to sponsor resource stewardship and public programs in league with its many partners and will expand weekend programming.



#### **New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park Staff**

##### Front Row Left to Right

Frank Barrows, Park Ranger

Jennifer Gonsalves, Park Ranger

Michelle Spink, Administrative Program Specialist

##### Back Row Left to Right

Tom Ross, Community Planner

Derek Santos, Historical Architect

John Piltzecker, Superintendent

Mike Caldwell, Deputy Superintendent